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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 THE HAGUE 000247

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TAGS: PTER KISL KIRF PREL ASEC PGOV NL

SUBJECT: COUNTERTERRORISM COORDINATOR ANTICIPATES LATE MARCH INTERNET RELEASE OF WILDERS KORAN FILM

REF: A. THE HAGUE 175

1B. THE HAGUE 133

1C. THE HAGUE 102

1D. THE HAGUE 61

Classified By: CDA MICHAEL GALLAGHER for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary. National Counterterrorism Coordinator Tjibbe Joustra told Charge March 11 that the government now anticipated a late March release date for MP Geert Wilders' controversial film on the Koran. He said Wilders could release the film on the Internet earlier than March 28, the date Wilders has tentatively scheduled a press conference to screen the film, but it was impossible to predict the release date with any certainty. Joustra added that if Wilders and Nieuwspoort, the international press center in the Hague, were not able to reach agreement on the security measures necessary for a press event there, he anticipated that Wilders would release the film through his website, fitnathemovie.com, and give a series of interviews to call attention to the release. Joustra stressed that the recent decision to raise the national threat level was based primarily on growing concerns about increased activity by international terrorist networks, especially Pakistani, in Europe; concern about potential responses to the film were only secondary in the determination. According to press reports March 12, Wilders has announced that he cannot afford the estimated 300,000 to 400,000 euro security costs for a press conference at Nieuwspoort, and thus will release the film on the internet. End Summary.

12. (C) Dutch National Counterterrorism Coordinator Tjibbe Joustra told the Charge during a March 11 meeting that Wilders was expected to release Fitna, his movie on the Koran, toward the end of March. He noted that Wilders would like to release the film during a press conference at Nieuwspoort, tentatively scheduled for March 28, but doing so was contingent on his reaching agreement with Nieuwspoort on covering the costs of the security measures required for Nieuwspoort to host the press conference safely. Joustra said that he had met earlier that same morning with board of Nieuwspoort to give them NCTb's assessment of the measures

they should put in place to ensure the safety of the Nieuwspoort staff and visitors. He said they were "wrestling with their consciences," because while they were committed to freedom of expression and the idea that members of Parliament should be free to use their facilities, they were reluctant to put the center at risk. Joustra noted that the security measures required would extend beyond the actual day of the event, and could impede normal business, as visitors and packages would need to be screened from the time a definitive announcement to host the press conference was made until some weeks afterwards. Wilders, or his Party for Freedom (PVV) would have to bear any costs associated with the additional security. Joustra was emphatic in stating that the Dutch government would not take on any costs for additional security. They would continue to provide security protection for Wilders, his family members and PVV members of Parliament as necessary. Joustra added that Wilders was not a wealthy man. The Dutch press reported March 12 that Wilders had announced that he could not afford the estimated 300,000 to 400,000 euro costs for the recommended security measures, and would therefore release the film via the Internet. Wilders reportedly said he hoped to do so as soon as possible, but still had to make arrangements to ensure that the website would not crash if too many people attempt to log on simultaneously as soon as the film is loaded.

¶3. (C) Joustra said he believed Wilders would give him advance notice of the film's release, but implied that it might not be a full 24-hours advance notice. In previous conversations with emboffs, NCTb and MFA staff have stressed their confidence that Wilders would give NCTb 24 hour advance notice. In a brief conversation with PolCouns on March 7, Joustra stated that he was "100 percent certain" that Wilders

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would give him an opportunity to watch the film before it was publicly released, so that Joustra would be prepared to take any additional security measures needed to ensure Wilders' personal security. He suggested that the film was likely to be perceived as more inflammatory than the Danish cartoons, though he noted that he does not have specific information about its content, or even whether will be in Dutch, English or another language. He said his understanding is that, due to security concerns, Wilders himself is the only individual who will appear on camera in the film, and that the production company will not be named; the director was likely to be identified under the nom de plume, "The Scarlet Pimpernel."

¶4. (C) Commenting on the government's decision to raise the national terrorist threat level from limited to substantial, which was announced in the National Terrorist Threat Assessment transmitted to parliament on March 6, Joustra stressed that the primary factor in the decision was concern about renewed activity in Western Europe by foreign terrorist networks, in particular Pakistani groups, which he said were very professional. Concerns about reactions to the film were definitely a secondary consideration in the determination, he said. Joustra cited the arrests over the last six months in Spain, Germany, Denmark and the UK as evidence of the increasing activity of foreign terrorist networks; he clarified that the government has not seen evidence of links specifically between the Pakistani networks and "homegrown" Dutch radical networks. Joustra's comments confirmed what we had heard earlier from a working level analyst in NCTb's Knowledge and Analysis Department, which is responsible for compiling the quarterly threat assessments.

¶5. (C) Joustra noted that a number of Dutch Muslim groups had been active in urging calm both in the Netherlands and abroad in response to the film. He said that even some very conservative imams, including the imam of the As Soennah mosque in The Hague, had spoken out against violent reactions to the film. (Note: The As Soennah mosque has been publicly identified as a radical mosque of concern to the government; Imam Fawaz gained notoriety several years ago for fiery

sermons against Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Theo van Gogh following the release of their film, Submission. End Note.) Joustra said he believed that Dutch Muslim outreach to religious and political leaders in majority Muslim countries had had a positive, although somewhat limited, impact on the debate over the film in those countries. Additionally, he said that governments in some Middle Eastern countries had drawn a distinction between the Dutch government's response to the Wilders' film and the Danish response to the Mohammed cartoons. That perceived distinction could help moderate the reactions to the film in those countries, he hoped. He identified Pakistan, Iran, Indonesia and Syria as countries of particular concern for potentially violent reactions.

Gallagher